The Builder.

No. CCCCLXXXII.

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1852.

ON the 27th ult. the Lyceum Theatre was filled in every part to overflowing, by the subscribers and friends of the Art-Union of London, to receive the report of the Council, and distribute the amount subscribed for the purchase of works of art. Lord Monteagle being unable to attend in consequence of the appointment of a committee of the House of Lords, the Right Hon. Lord Londesborough was requested to preside. On taking the chair, his Lordship said,—I shall begin the business of this day by expressing to you my regret that the chair should not be more ably filled, by a nobleman who is so much better known than myself, as connected with the fine arts of this country. I shall reserve any observations that I may have to make till a later period in this meeting; and I shall now merely call upon our honorary secretary, who has given up for us so much of his time, to read the report.

Mr. Godwin, F.R.S. then read the following

REPORT.

The Council are again able to congratulate the members of the Art-Union of London on the increasing prosperity of the Corporation. The subscription of the year amounts to the sum of 12,903*l.* showing a considerable increase on the amount collected in 1851. Each member received, on payment of his subscription, the engraving of "An English Merry-making in the Olden Time."

The plate of "Queen Philippa and the Burgesses of Calais," engraved by Mr. H. Robinson, after Mr. H. Selous, is now fast approaching completion, and promises to be a fine and interesting work. Those who became entitled to proofs of this at previous distributions will receive them speedily. The delay which has occurred was caused by the illness of the engraver, and, although greatly regretted by the Council, could not be avoided.

For the ensuing year, it is proposed to give to each subscriber an impression of this plate. Arrangements will be made to prevent a repetition of the engraving to those who may have gained a proof by offering the choice of some other print. Each subscriber will further receive a *fac-simile* engraving of the design in *basso-relievo*, by Mr. Hancock, "Christ led to Crucifixion," which will serve as a companion to the "Entry into Jerusalem," previously distributed.

The plate of "The Crucifixion," after Hilton, is completed, and is now at press. The right to 488 impressions of this large and costly work will be determined to-day.

For a succeeding year "The Piper," after Mr. F. Goodall, and "Richard Cœur de Lion," after Mr. Cross, are nearly completed, and promise to be very satisfactory productions.

The illustrations of "The Traveller" having proved agreeable to the subscribers at large, the Council propose to obtain and issue a series of wood engravings from eminent artists, illustrative of "Childe Harold." They further contemplate a series of engravings from a selected number of the best works of deceased British artists, with the design of forming a series of the best examples of the English school of painting, a work which the Council hope will prove acceptable and at the same time instructive to the subscribers.

For the convenience of the subscribers of last year who had the choice of two prints ("The Burial of Harold" and "The Villa of Lucullus"), and are anxious to make their series complete by the addition of the print they did *not* select, the Council have arranged to allow each subscriber the right to purchase one impression for a small sum.

The medal commemorative of Inigo Jones has been ably completed by Mr. Carter, and impressions have been delivered to those prize-holders to whom they were due.

The lamented death of Mr. Wyon, R.A. has unfortunately prevented the execution of the Flaxman medal. The Council have made arrangements, however, to obtain it from other hands; and they suggest that the prizeholders entitled to receive it should accept, in lieu, any one of the medals already issued by the Society. The Council propose to add to their series—which has now taken an important shape—a medal commemorative of the eminent medallist England has lost, and they have entrusted the execution of it to his son, Mr. Leonard Wyon.

Amongst the prizes in the present distribution will be found twenty-five sets of the medals already issued, five in number.

The prizeholders of last year purchased 110 paintings and drawings, and a bust in marble by Mr. M'Dowell. The presence of many strangers in London led the Council to desire to enlarge the Society's Exhibition, by including in it as many of the principal prize-works of former years as could conveniently be obtained, and, the prizeholders kindly assenting to their wish, a very interesting and beautiful collection was formed in the Suffolk-street Gallery, kindly afforded by the Society of British Artists for that purpose, and was visited by a large number of persons of all ranks, notwithstanding that the postponment of the close of the Royal Academy Exhibition had driven the opening of it late into the season.

The Council have always a satisfaction in recording that, although during a part of the time the public were admitted without any restrictions whatever, not the slightest damage was done, or impropriety committed.

His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, Vice-President of the Corporation, opened his collections at Northumberland House, and at Syon House, as did the Earl of Ellesmere at Bridgewater House, and other distinguished owners of works of art. Very large numbers of persons availed themselves of the privilege afforded.

The Council have before now pointed attention to the numerous fine collections of works of art which England possesses; but which are scarcely thought of by some who travel long distances to study others, of less importance. It is the same with many of our buildings, which, being at hand and constantly before us, are often disregarded. The ancient monuments in Westminster Abbey, for example, to the state of which public attention has been lately drawn by a member of your Council, offer examples of various sorts of art of the rarest kind and greatest beauty:—

> "And thus 'tis ever; what's within our ken,
> Owl-like, we blink at, and direct our search
> To farthest Inde in quest of novelties;
> Whilst here at Home, upon our very thresholds,
> Ten thousand objects hurtle into view,
> Of interest wonderful."

The death of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge having left the Corporation without a President, the Right Hon. Lord Monteagle has been elected to the office. His Lordship said, in reply to the request of the Council that he would accept the appointment:—"I feel much honoured by your choice, and shall be happy to serve you in any position in which you are pleased to place me. But pray consider that I hold my situation as a trust for your benefit; and if, at any time, you can replace me by one whose name and influence will be more useful to you, do not hesitate to make such a conviction known to me, and I shall be equally ready to promote your interests by resigning, as by accepting the office of President."

The council were glad to be able, by this election, to show their appreciation of the services long and zealously rendered to the Art-Union of London by Lord Monteagle, and they feel sure of receiving your cordial assent to the appointment.

The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ely, long a member of the Council, has been elected Vice-President.

The retiring members of Council are John Britton, esq. (whose increasing years lead him to cease the active course of life he has long pursued), W. C. Macready, esq. and W. Duckworth, esq.

The vacancies have been filled by the election of H. A. J. Munro, esq.; Charles Hill, esq.; Mr. Alderman Salomons; and W. Leaf, esq.

The subscribers will remember that in reply to premiums of 100*l.* and 50*l.* offered respectively for the first and second best model in plaster of a single figure, fitted to be afterwards produced in bronze, forty statuettes were submitted to the Council, and by arrangement with the Royal Commissioners formed a prominent part of the Great Exhibition in Hyde-park. At the close of the Exhibition the Council selected "Satan Dismayed," found to be by Mr. H. H. Armstead, of Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields, for the first premium, and "Solitude," by Mr. J. Lawlor, of Wyndham-street, Bryanston-square, for the second. The Council further expressed their approbation of a third, "Ephialtes Chained," found to be by Mr. Hunt, of Harrison-street, Gray's-inn-lane, and would, moreover, now offer their thanks to all the other artists who responded to their invitation. "Satan Dismayed" is being executed in bronze, together with the figure on the base; though the latter was not included in the consideration of the design in competition. One finished copy is now before you, and is by far the most important work in bronze yet issued by the Society.

"Solitude" has been placed in the hands of Messrs. Minton, to be produced in Parian statuary. The distribution to-day will include five of the bronzes "Satan Dismayed," the actual cost of which will be 50*l.* each, and thirty statuettes of "Solitude."

Very considerable increase has taken place in the preparation of bronzes in England since the Art-Union commenced the production of them; but this material still offers a very profitable field for artistic industry, at present scarcely worked. The desire to erect permanent testimonials to the late Sir Robert Peel has led to larger use of bronze than has hitherto been the case. It is to be hoped that sculpture generally is about to find means for completer development amongst us than has yet been afforded to it. At present we have raised statues only to the Heroes of War: we are but beginning to remember the Heroes of Peace,—that those who lengthen life, elevate the condition of the masses, and increase the sum of human happiness and good, equally deserve the gratitude of their fellows, and that statues in testimony of this may properly be set up to awaken emulation, and incite others to a similar course of usefulness.

The local honorary secretaries have continued their valuable efforts in behalf of the Society, and are entitled to the best thanks of all interested in the progress of the arts, and the prosperity of artists. Fresh co-operators have been found in Cadiz, Palermo, Prince Edward's Island, Launceston, Van Diemen's Land, Geelong, Port Phillip,—notwithstanding the excitement consequent on the find of gold there, which promises to give fresh power to the country,—Newfoundland, and Alexandria. From Boston, in the United States, through the exertions of Mr. W. H. Dennet, our local agent, as many as 405 names have been received. The Council have always felt strongly the importance of connecting by the arts of peace and refinement our brother Saxons on the other side of the Atlantic with their mother country; and they watch with interest the progress the fine arts are making amongst them. The Council propose, as a means of rendering the operations of the Art-Union of London more completely known in America, to forward to the Great Exhibition of Industry and Art, which is about to be opened in New York, a cast of "The Dancing Girl reposing," and such other of the Society's works as can conveniently be sent.

The reserved fund now amounts to 4,740.

The following is a statement of the receipts and expenditure:—

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